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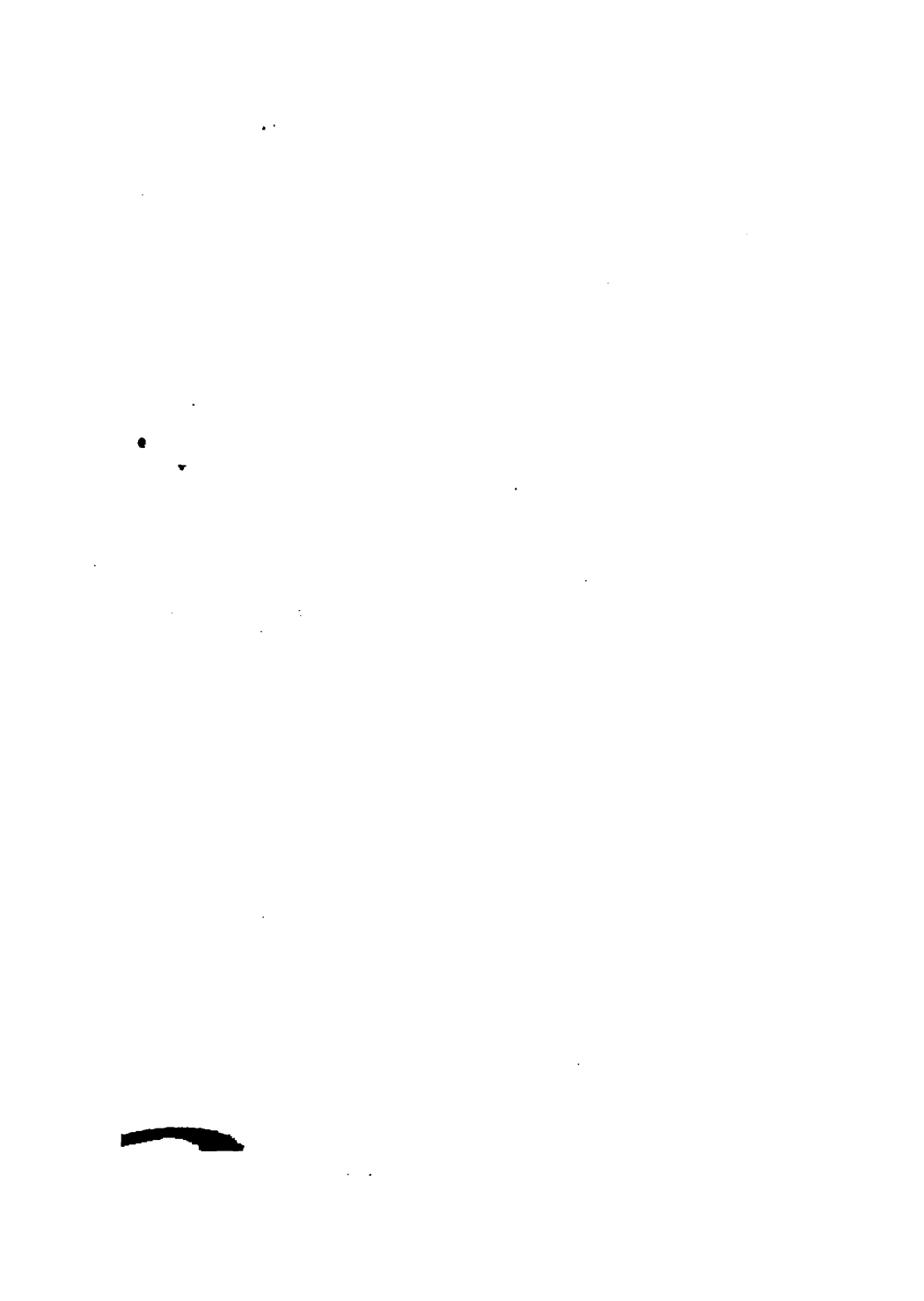
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POPERY AND INFIDELITY.



POPERY AND INFIDELITY.

BY

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POPERY AND INFIDELITY.

IT IS WRITTEN.—In these words of Emanuel—God in our nature, we have the Divine point of view in which the Holy Scriptures are to be regarded. Within this circle there is light and life, peace and assurance for ever.

It is *not* written—Within this circle there is doubt and darkness, and inextricable error.

From the Bible proceeds the religion of God, pure, unchangeable, and eternal, like its Author. From the fallen mind of man issue the religions of men, vain as various; ever changing, yet ever marked with the impress of departure from God, which they derive from their inventors. The Bible is a perfect whole. It admits of no additions from the superstitious, and no curtailments from the rationalist. It remains fenced, as holy ground, from every impure hand, with the Divine sanction on its perfect integrity; having the closing words of the Revelation applicable to every part of it—"If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book: and, if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life," &c.

Of the Bible it may be said, in a far higher sense than of Tyre of old, "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in

beauty." The Bible is its own evidence—like its Divine Author, whose brightness and character it reflects. It is a light, which "coming into the world enlighteneth every man" who is willing to receive its testimony concerning Jesus. It is also its own commentary—explaining, enlarging, and confirming one passage by another, and one book by another. It is our prayer-book—containing words given from God Himself, whereby we may approach Him—pleading the most needful petitions, in the aptest words. It is our creed, and confession of faith—for there we find every statement that is requisite concerning God our Creator—God our Redeemer—God our Sanctifier—free from all scholastic technology, and bearing directly upon the heart and the life. In the Bible we have our best and only true Theology, containing all that can be certainly known respecting our salvation—not arranged in an artificial system—but so disclosed to us, both in its light, and in its shadings, as to present to us not only what is true, but every truth in its due proportion and distance. And the written word is thus complete, because it is the exact transcript of the ever-living Word—the Word that was in the beginning—the Word that was with God—the Word that was God. The Bible is the complete record of a divinely completed salvation. Holding the Head, we possess all things. Being in Christ, we are complete before God in Him. When we believe in Him, He is ours and we are His. His life is ours, and his whole fulfilment of the law, during a life of sorrow and suffering. As He lived for us, so He died for us—and as by faith we partake in the benefits of His death, so we become sharers in the glories of His resurrection.

We are saved by faith—and by faith alone—by believing God's testimony concerning His Son, we pass at once from death unto life, and into a preparation for future glory. All who by believing belong to Christ are led by the Spirit of Christ. The Spirit is one infinite Spirit, but the gifts of the Spirit are divided, in order that the whole body of believers may be united—none having a self-sufficiency of spiritual graces appropriated to themselves, but all made complete only in the unity of Christ's Uni-

versal Body—the congregated assembly of believers throughout all ages, to be united together in the Heaven of Heavens.

The true religion evidently consists in receiving the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. He who would mix man's words and man's thoughts with God's words and God's thoughts, neither truly believes in the Bible, nor in its Author. "Add not thou to His words lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar." He who would attempt to illustrate, confirm, or extend the Truths of God by the comments of man, might as well light candles to search for the sun shining in noon-day splendour in the heavens—and he who would turn aside his ear to hearken to what man is saying, when God Himself speaks, would act as unwisely and impiously as an Israelite, who might have ceased to listen to the voice of Jehovah, speaking from Sinai, in order to count the reverberations of the accompanying thunders, as they rolled from mountain to mountain, in the increasing distance.

Tradition always alters where inspiration ceases. The scholastic maxim is true, "whatever is received, is received according to the capacity of the recipient." Something is omitted, and something is added, as tradition passes from mouth to mouth; and what was imperfect at first, becomes mutilated or perverted at last. This has been the case in philosophy and in false religion, as well as in true religion. In the philosophy of the mind, we formerly pointed out a striking instance, in the school of Pythagoras. "If innovation in opinions could ever possibly have been checked, it would have had no place among the disciples of Pythagoras, who silenced every rising doubt by the Pythagorean 'Ipse dixit,' and affirmed the truth of their doctrines by oaths as well as arguments—swearing by the name of their master—the demigod who had revealed to them the innermost secrets of nature;" "but, as in pouring liquor from one vessel to another, a minute portion is generally lost, and a secret taint may be received; so opinions adapt themselves to the mind that receives them, and the same words in another mouth have no longer the very same significance—for their meaning is, in

some degree, qualified or clouded—coloured or expanded. To the eye of the passing observer the current of opinion may seem to run smooth in its ancient bed, nevertheless it is all the while wasting away the opposing banks, and preparing for itself another channel.” And, if the intelligent followers in almost every succession of this school altered the tenets of their master, how much greater a change would the higher doctrines of Christianity have suffered had they been entrusted to tradition, without written and inspired records, when passing through the hands of the first unlettered disciples!

Another example of the disfiguring effects of tradition might be taken from the false revelation of the Koran. The religion of the Caliphs was different from that of their prophet, owing to the additional mass of legends and traditions that were accumulating round it; like the vapoury tail of a comet, much larger than the little nucleus to which it is attached—and when the Wahabees began to separate these foreign admixtures from the original elements of Islam, they seemed like the propounders of a new faith, to the majority of the Moslem.

But far the most striking example is that of the Jews about the time of our Saviour. Though venerating the sacred volume of the Old Testament with a blind and unhesitating homage, counting each book and section—and letter—to preserve it free from admixture, they so obscured the heavenly light with the clouded fancies of their own minds, and the dark traditions of their rabbins, that they incurred the merited condemnation of the Divine teacher, who had descended into the midst of them: “In vain do ye worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” And, if the Church of the Jews drew down upon themselves such a sentence, what doom is impending over the false Church of Rome, which has heaped up human authority above measure; and buried the living oracles under a tumulus of the piled up rubbish of antiquity, and a mass of idolatrous fables.

Rome subordinates the Bible to tradition—the infallible to the fallible—God to man—and the Divine words to the human

comment—for, if the Bible is to be interpreted by tradition, mightier is tradition than the Scriptures! But where does that tradition exist, and in what form? God has so ordered it, that though all traditions are defective, Christian tradition is most so. We shall first point out the fact, and then assign the cause.

We must, however, premise, that two works are especially wanting, a complete Church History—and the lives and opinions of the early Fathers. Two works which would stand in intimate relation with each other, as History and Biography, (the size need not alarm, if the rubbish were cleared away;) and might well be executed by the same hand, from the same materials. Historians too frequently veil the defects of the absence of documents, and endeavouring to make that appear continuous, which is only fragmentary: thus Gibbon conceals the want of information by the oracular style of Tacitus, and covers over the chasms of history with a profusion of flowers.

The writer of a just and genuine Church History would be careful to point out that his work must necessarily be fragmentary, from the want of that which Rome with all her arts cannot supply, genuine Christian tradition. The progress of Christianity is imperfectly noted—the attention of the earlier Christians was arrested by two subjects—heresies and persecutions. “If you can follow the Christian Church in her early history,” says Leighton, “it is by the track of her blood; and if you would see her, it is by the light of those fires in which her martyrs have been burnt.”

Milner greatly perverts history by selecting only pious sentiments, and leaving the impression that these were characteristic of the life and actions of the person who spoke them: he is more partial than Gibbon himself, though in an opposite direction. What can be more contrary to the whole truth than Milner's account of Pope Gregory the Great? Mosheim, though trustworthy, presents but the skeleton of antiquity. Neander's, though full of promise, is, properly speaking, no history at all. It is not a narrative of events, but a narrative of what Neander felt and thought when he was revolving these events in his

mind; and with him, as with later Germans in general, the subjective overpowers the objective—the narrative is often omitted and forgotten, while the meditation alone remains. Though Neander is more at home in giving an account of heresy, than of the progress of Christianity, yet even here it is but an ideal account; not what was actually thought, but how thoughts ought to have run in the current of error, had the Heresiarchs been under the guidance of some German professor, and not been left free to follow the native aberrations of their own age and mind.

A work upon Church history* would be one of the best refutations of Popery—though brief and compendious necessarily, from the want of authentic materials; and, purposely, for the service of the people. It would cut up the pretence of infallibility by the roots, for it would shew a continued change of opinion, and an unceasing accession of error. Bungener's work on the Council of Trent† points out how opinions were there formed, and decrees ratified—with what imperfect information, and what worldly motives. A similar analysis might be applied to all previous councils; and before councils ever existed there would be traced the secret growth of heresy within the Church, as well as its open proclamation beyond its boundaries.

But tradition cannot even perpetuate itself, and either escapes into the region of mythology, or is fixed at some particular stage of its metamorphoses, in writings long subsequent to its origin. When the Romanists refer to tradition, they must appeal to the writings of the so-called "Fathers." The mass of the first Christians were an unlettered people; this is plainly marked in their epitaphs from the catacombs, by their defective spelling, and still more defective Latin. Many of them were scarcely even a reading people, as the names of Asinius and Porcius, having an ass and pig appended to them, for the benefit of the unlearned, but too sufficiently demonstrate. The Christian writers, to borrow a phrase from Dr. Chalmers, were oftener "*ab extra*, than *ab intra*"—new recruits who brought their taste

* Would that the author of "Ancient Christianity" had cast his work into a continuous and completely historical form.

† History of the Council of Trent; from the French of L. F. Bungener. Edinburgh, 1852.

for literature with them, from the heathen Bar, or the heathen schools of philosophy; and who were prone to teach, before they had thoroughly learned their lesson. The title of "Fathers" is not very applicable to such writers, but antiquity, and imperfect acquaintance, render every thing that is recondite venerable. The lives and writings of the Fathers in moderate compass, containing specimens both of their excellences and defects; just to their merits, generous to their unavoidable short-comings, would do a very great service to the cause of truth. They certainly, with rational men, would not stand high as authorities; even as witnesses they are inaccurate, as well as injudicious—their chief excellence is their frequent quotation of Scripture, but their interpretation of Scripture is inferior and fanciful. There is evidently a great chasm in tradition even from the earliest times. The varying explanations of the most important passages shew that the meaning of them was not handed down from apostolic times to succeeding generations. Such as the Commentary is, however, it is against the claims of Popery—against the tradition of the Church, against its immutability, and against its infallibility.

Rome leans on tradition, and professes to be built on the foundation of the Fathers; but many of the Fathers remove its only foundation, the supposed support that it has in the declaration, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church," as Mr. Faber well sums up, in his "Difficulties of Romanism,"—"Justin, the oldest father who notices the place, contends, that the rock, upon which our Lord promised to build his Church, is, not Peter individually, but Peter's confession of faith. Athanasius, Jerome, and Augustine maintain that the rock is Christ Himself." But the Fathers differ not only from each other, but often from themselves. "Chrysostom, in one place, supposes Peter individually to have been the rock, but in another place he pronounces, with Justin Martyr, that the rock was Peter's confession." And Mr. Faber might, if he pleased, have produced a host of authorities on either side of the question.

"Whatsoever Time," as Milton says, in those words which

will almost outlast Time, "or the heedless hand of blind chance, hath drawn down from of old, to this present, in her huge drag-net, whether fish, or sea-weed, shells or shrubs, unpicked, unchosen, those are the Fathers."

Though the opinion of Milton may sound too severe, yet, it approaches much nearer the truth than the very groundless reverence that is often paid to antiquity. A candid examination would shew how deficient the Fathers were in facts, and in general information—hence the poverty of Church History. How inexact in their utterance of their opinions—hence the difficulty of deciding what they actually thought, when any subject, in our days, is brought into dispute. How very imperfect, not to say erroneous, were their rules, when they had any, for the interpretation of Scripture! and from what impure, and even Pagan sources, many of their tenets were derived! It would be necessary also strongly to note, how variable, on many important subjects, the opinions of the early Christians were. For example, at one time Millenarianism prevailed; at another time, Anti-millenarianism. But one topic alone, if thoroughly examined, would put to flight the dreams of Rome, respecting the authority of the Fathers, and the infallibility of the Church; we mean the doctrines entertained concerning the Trinity by the early Christian writers. In modern controversies, the Fathers seem to lend themselves to every interpretation. How great is the noise of disputants! Each citing the Fathers, and each claiming the victory; while the contending champions, like the heroes in Homer, are encircled by a sudden cloud, and rescued by the friendly darkness, in the very jaws of defeat.

An impartial account of the difficulties attending the testimonies of the Fathers on this subject, might have its use; and these difficulties, we believe, might have almost all their solution in observing, what has generally escaped notice, the influence which the Emanative philosophy exercised over the theories of the early Christian writers. But as tradition does not convey to us the correct history of events, far less could it be expected to hand down to us the orthodoxy of opinions.

The deficiency of tradition in recording events, may be strongly exemplified in a particular subject—the harmony of the four Gospels. After every attempt we find it impossible to make them coincide, so as to form a perfect whole. If a precious porcelain vase is broken, we can piece it together again, if we have all the fragments; but if some are lost, the attempt is hopeless. Had tradition preserved to us additional events in the life of the Saviour, even in a very imperfect form, we should have found a part of what we wanted; but no incident connected with his life, and unrecorded in the Gospels, has survived. The apocryphal gospels are mere puerile inventions, not even the distorted rumours of what had formerly taken place. What tradition denies to us, she denied to the first succeeding ages, as is evidenced by the early attempts at Diatessarons, and by their being all unsatisfactory, one Diatessaron speedily succeeding another. There were chasms that could not be filled up; the Gospels were fragments then, as they remain fragments now, the sole survivors of a former age. And what was the cause of this defect of tradition? The Scriptures themselves. “Forasmuch as many have taken in hand,” says Luke, “to set forth in order a declaration of those things, which are most surely believed amongst us,” &c., &c. What has become of these narratives? As soon as Luke had written, they naturally ceased to be read; the stronger light extinguished the weaker.

The two rotten pillars on which corrupted Christianity rests are early Tradition and Apostolical succession. Tradition, as we have seen, falls to the ground. There is no Papal Talmud, like that of the Jews, which the Romanists can produce, shewing where or from whom their traditions proceeded; designating the school, or the doctor, as the celebrated Rabbi, or “the house of Elias,” where the traditionary document had its original seat: they can only have recourse to the Fathers, and the testimony of the Fathers is variable and contradictory. They are equally unhappy with regard to Apostolical succession. We may cite Dr. Wiseman, though, with the privilege of a cardinal, he takes rather too great liberties with the Fathers of his Church; but as

the liberties here taken are liberties of omission, we accept them and are grateful. "Saint Irenæus, one of the oldest (Fathers,) writes as follows:—'As it would be tedious to enumerate the whole list of successors, I shall confine myself to that of Rome, the greatest, and most ancient, and most illustrious Church, founded by the glorious Apostles, Peter and Paul; receiving from them her doctrine, which was announced to all men, and which, through the succession of her bishops, is come down to us.'" We leave out a sentence erroneously translated, but not applying to our present purpose, and resume—"They, therefore, having founded and instructed this Church, committed the administration thereof to Linus. To him succeeded Anacletus; then, in the third place, Clement. To Clement succeeded Evaristus, to him Alexander; and then Sixtus, who was followed by Telesphorus, Hyginus, Pius, and Anicetus. But Soter having succeeded Anicetus, Eleutherius, the twelfth from the Apostles, now governs the Church.'" We have here an example of the little intelligence and attention with which the Fathers read the Scriptures. The Epistle to the Romans would shew a Sunday School scholar of our days, that the Church of Rome had been founded before St. Paul visited it. The same epistle would also demonstrate that the Church of Rome was not founded by any other Apostle, for one object of the Apostle's proposed visit, was to impart to them those gifts which were communicated by laying on of the hands of the Apostles.

It is not proved that the Apostle Peter was ever in Rome; certainly not till long after the foundation of the Church, and not till after its visitation by Paul. The whole, therefore, of Irenæus's account is a baseless fabric. So much for Tradition; so much for Apostolical succession.

But there are, if possible, still greater errors, and a deeper ignorance behind. Dr. John Brown, in his learned and admirable exposition of St. Peter's first Epistle, observes, "that the only Bishops known in the New Testament, are the same class of persons who are termed Elders, may be made very plain in a

few words. Paul, on his journey from Macedonia to Jerusalem, sent from Miletus, and called the Elders of Ephesus; and when these elders had come, he exhorted them to 'take heed to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers,' bishops. Paul writing to Titus, states, that he left him in Crete to ordain elders in every city. He enumerates the qualifications of an elder, and then adds, 'for a bishop (or overseer) must be blameless,' &c.; if this does not identify the bishop with the elder, what can do it?" Accordingly, the scriptural bishops are always in the plural number; and bishops and presbyters are terms interchangeable, forming the council or senate of the Church. We believe that Diotrephes, "who loved to have the pre-eminence," is the first example in the Scriptures of a singular president, who took the whole reins of ecclesiastical government into his own hand, in order to exclude the Apostle John.

Bishops in the singular number, and distinguished from the elders, became afterwards common during the second century. Of this change Irenæus appears to have been ignorant; so thick a cloud of darkness had fallen even upon his times. What should we think of a list of consuls, (whose very names indicated their joint authority,) in which list a line of consuls in the singular only was mentioned? We must conclude it to have been forged after the Republic, and even after the Empire. A list of the Bishops of Rome in the singular, must not only have been fabricated, but fabricated after the memory of the Apostolical church had vanished away. The distance was but short between the times of Irenæus and the Apostles, and had there been but one bishop from the beginning, we have no doubt the lists would have been correct; but when there were many bishops their names were less important, nor could the succession of a plurality of church officers be marked with the same accuracy as when there was but one eminent individual.

Hence a chasm at the commencement of the pedigree, and the diversity between Irenæus and Tertullian. Irenæus making Linus the first bishop, and Tertullian, Clement. Dr. Alexander, in his excellent observations on Apostolical succession, asks,

“What should we think of a man who should claim a dormant peerage, on such pretences as those on which the Anglican clergy claim spiritual descent from the Apostles?” certainly such claims, with such miserable lack of proof, would not be entertained by any court of law.

The term Apostolical succession contains in itself an absurdity. The Apostles could have no successors. It is pointed out in the Acts, that the Apostles “must needs be witnesses of the life and resurrection of Jesus.” The Apostle Paul considered himself as one “born out of due season,” though a personal witness of the presence and glory of the Lord Jesus, after his resurrection. But by this ill-defined phrase, is probably intimated merely a claim to be successors to those who were appointed by the apostles. Then the Church of Rome is the worst chosen Church to found such a claim upon.

It was founded without the Apostles, by the early disciples; and that party in the Church of England, who would derive their succession and authority from Rome, have the least claim of all—for even the ultra-Papists, who exalt the Romish See to the uttermost, never ascribed a suicidal authority to the Pope. He may give authority to preach in favour of Rome, but he cannot give authority to preach against it; when the connexion ceases, the derived authority must cease also.

The charm of the succession must be ascribed to a mysterious virtue derived from the hands of the Apostles—but the Apostles did not lay on hands arbitrarily—the Cheirothesia (to use a Greek term familiar with the readers of the Greek New Testament, and of Harrington) required to be preceded by the Cheirotomia: none were ordained who were not popularly elected. Where there is no foundation, there is no superstructure; where the beginning is wanting the consummation is wanting also. Besides, the claim to Apostolical succession leads to a conclusion very different from that which is desired. The Apostles prophesied of the great apostasy, and of the false teachers who were to succeed them—that falling away interrupts the Apostolical descent by a chasm which cannot be overpast—and the line ends, not in the imme-

diate successors of the Apostles, but in those "grievous wolves" which were to enter in, "not sparing the flock."

But if there be no succession, whence do evangelists and pastors derive their authority? From the same source from which the Apostles derived theirs—the truth. "We believe, and therefore we have spoken." No authority can justify error, and no authority can prevent the truth from not only being believed, but proclaimed. No injury can be derived, from the truth being its own sole warrant. Thus truth and authority remain coincident—and while authority is inseparably connected with truth, it can never be abused. The ministers of the Gospel fall under two classes—that of evangelists, and that of pastors. Every man has both a right and a duty to proclaim aloud the fire that is about to consume his neighbour's dwelling; and he who believes the truth, to the saving of his own soul from the flames of eternity, has a right and a duty to announce the same saving truth to others. All that an evangelist requires is a deep conviction of the truth, and the will and the ability to utter it. With regard to the pastor, two wills must coincide—the choice of the people, and the consent of the pastor, both parties being guided by prayer, and both placing themselves, according to the word of God, under the Divine direction. If there be the right cheirotomia, the effective cheirothesia will follow. If the hand be outstretched, first to seek the Divine direction, then to designate the fit person, the Divine blessing will flow forth, whether there be the imposition of mortal hands or no. At Athens there were two churches, or *ecclesiæ*; the assembly of the people, and the assembly of God—the one consisting of the citizens who were enrolled—according to the law, in the legal lists—the other of those whose names were written in the book of eternal life; the one, of whom "Minerva" was "bishop"—the other ruled by the humble overseers whom the people chose, and Paul ordained. Both governed according to their respective written laws—the orators citing the decrees of the people—the pastors the oracles of the living God; but both, however different in their objects and ends, having a common designation,

and much of a common character. The Episcopi of the Christian Church, like the Ephori of Sparta, began by being the organs, and ended by becoming the masters, of their respective communities. At first, a Christian Church was a free society for mutual instruction. Spiritual gifts were not accumulated upon a single head, but were divided throughout the members for their mutual edification—and the distinction was strongly drawn, between the visible Churches and the invisible Church—between those little seminaries, where souls were preparing for heaven, and the upper paradise to which, when prepared, they should be transplanted.

But there is nothing upon earth, except the word of God, which is stable. The outward form of discipline and the inward spirit of life, remained not for a single age the same. The Church of Ephesus had left its first love, even during the life of the Apostle John; and among the plurality of bishops there was one, it would seem, who was seeking to become sole overseer, while the presbyters were about to become a subordinate body. In the apostolical epistles the body of the faithful is generally addressed, more rarely the office-bearers, but, as by a large admixture of those who were slow to learn, "though for the time they ought to have been teachers," the people, by disuse, had lost their privileges, and in like manner, as kings of an abject multitude become "the state," so the office-bearers became "the Church," the community receiving their religious opinions from the mouths of their usurping instructors. The same names remained; but how different in their import were the churches and bishops of the real, or pseudo Ignatius, from the overseeing elders of Paul, and the churches planted in Greece and Asia by him! As Nature, first used as a term of convenience, and to prevent the too frequent repetition of the name of the Deity, passes, in philosophic writing, from the mere constitution of the creation, to become an idol invested with semi-divine attributes, and at last to usurp the place of the Creator; so the Church—the idol of the superstitious, as Nature of the irreligious, becomes, first a personification, and then an imaginary power: taking the place of Christ

and invested with several of the attributes, as well as with the authority of the Saviour. Three figments gradually set themselves up in opposition to the truth—a pretended Apostolical succession—setting aside the Divine regulations: a pretended Tradition, taking its place beside the Bible, and gradually adulterating its meaning, and superseding its authority: and the imaginary Church—a phantom, whose ill defined magnitude was constantly expanding, standing between earth and heaven, and interposing between the sinner and the Saviour.

There have been three periods, leaving out of view the constant tyranny of Rome, of such high-church pretensions as we have been describing:—the age of Constantine, and of his successors; the time of the usurpation of Charles and Laud; and the more puny, and we trust short-lived pretensions of Puseyism; which last is so rapidly merging into the great mass of Romish corruptions as almost to require an apology for noticing its ephemeral existence. Puseyism, of all heresies, has given the most ingenuous account of its origin. It seems to have taken for its model the proceedings of “the unjust steward.” “I am resolved what to do,” said this prudent person, so careless for his master’s interest, so careful of his own, “that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.” In a similar strain says No. I. of “The Tracts for the Times,”—“Should the government and the country so far forget their God as to cast off the Church, to deprive it of its temporal honours and substance, *on what* will you rest the claim of respect and attention which you make upon your flocks? Hitherto you have been upheld by your birth, your education, your wealth, your connexions; should these secular advantages cease, on what must Christ’s ministers depend? Is not this a serious practical interrogation? We know how miserable is the state of religious bodies not supported by the State.”—“I fear we have neglected the real ground on which our authority is built—our Apostolical Descent. Now every one of us believes this; I know that some will at first deny they do; still they do believe it. Only it is not sufficiently practically impressed upon

their minds. They do believe it; for it is the doctrine of the ordination service," &c. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," &c.

An additional claim is also made to the veneration of Britain on the ground of spiritual monopoly, "The Church of England being the only Church in this realm which has a right to be quite sure that she has the Lord's body to give to His people." Where we see that not even a proviso is made to save the rights of the Mother-Church of Rome. Professor Sewel, though a noted Tractarian, and assenting to these ingenious tactics, is somewhat astonished at his own boldness. "These powers are very great; they are even awful, if not truly conferred by God, they are blasphemously assumed by man." That they were assumed by man, and assumed for a present exigency, is evident from the above quotations; that they were assumed without scriptural authority, (and therefore blasphemously assumed,) will be readily granted by every true Protestant, and also by every true Romanist.

The Puseyites profess to be lovers of antiquity, they are fond of going back to fifteen hundred years ago. Why not eighteen hundred years ago? the reason is plain—they like the religion of Constantine, but not the religion of the Bible. But the age of Constantine is the very period from which the genuine Church of England shrinks back. The Bible, as interpreted by the Fathers of the three first centuries, is the ground on which the true Churchmen take their stand. Mr. Faber, in his excellent work, "On the Difficulties of Romanism," has victoriously proved that the three first centuries are contrary to the peculiar doctrines of Rome. The Church is therefore neither immutable nor infallible, seeing that the three first centuries are opposed to the succeeding ones; Tradition and the Fathers being witnesses. But Mr. Faber is too acute for himself, the Fathers having routed Rome, like the hosts of Midian, fall upon each other. If we expect a stop and a hitch at the end of the third century, why should we be surprised if that century should fall before the superior illumination of the first and second? and that both the second and the first,

in their turn, when weighed, should be found wanting in the balance of the Gospel?—so fails us, as a broken reed, all human authority! “The voice said, Cry;—What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field:—the grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.” We desire to restrict our remarks to the High Church of England, for there are two hostile bodies that march alike under her banners, according to the oracle given to Rebecca—Two nations are within thee, and two manner of people shall be separated from thee. Would that in this case also the elder might serve the younger! The Puseyites desire to return to the Church of Constantine; but the Church of Constantine was big with the Church of Rome! Without, however, waiting till opinions had ripened into their ultimate results, the Puseyites have found a shorter path of returning to the modern Babylon; and Puseyism does more for Rome than Rome can do for herself; Oxford is a better nurse of Popery, than Salamanca.

The same evil star of error, and its consequent punishment, seems to arise in successive periods over the nations—“And the name of the star is called Wormwood; and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, because they were made bitter.” That baleful planet, which shed its disastrous light over the latter part of the Roman Empire, reappeared in the days of Laud, and is again ascending above the horizon. Like effects will follow like causes. The same errors in Theology will be attended with the same perversions in morals; and, unless the good providence of God interfere, with equally disastrous political results.

To resume what has been said: the all-sufficiency of the Bible, excluding all additions, of itself excludes both Puseyism and Popery. Both of these receive a double refutation from examining the supports on which they lean—Tradition—Succession—and the unscriptural Church. But Popery receives a third refutation in the monstrosity of its dogmas, alike contrary to reason, and unsupported by evidence. It is in vain that Popery, like

Puseyism, appeals to antiquity, "from the beginning it was not so." There were the seeds of error early in the Church, but not its full development. The testimony of the earlier ages is against Popery—though there are indirect indications of the commencement of Popish errors; chiefly, however, among the ruder multitude. At the martyrdom of Polycarp the Jews warned the Roman magistrate to withdraw the relics of the deceased, lest the Christians should forsake "the crucified," and adopt a newer Patron. An advice which moved the wonder and scorn of the intelligent Christians, but which yet had something prophetic in it—the Romanists have realized the taunts of these Jews, having substituted the worship of the Martyr's relics, for the worship of the Saviour. At first the error was but a seminal speck, a minute aberration, which the keen malice of an enemy's eye could alone detect.

About the commencement of the third century the heathens accused the Christians of worshipping the cross. Minucius Felix, for himself and for his enlightened brethren, boldly, and justly, we believe, denies it in the well known sentence, "*Cruces nec colimus, nec optamus;*" but, again, there was something prophetic in the accusation, founded on the growing belief of the supposed influence of the cross, to avert the powers of evil.

The Papist pleads the antiquity of his opinions—so may the Socinian—as we have shewn in "The Errors regarding Religion." So may the antsupernaturalist. Error is as old as Truth. In the fallen mind of man it is even antecedent to revealed truth—and Christianity and Antichristianity are connate: springing up together at the first publication of the Gospel, from the sudden mixture of new created light, with ancient darkness which it disturbed, not destroyed. It would have been easy to have found patrons for error, even in the Apostolical Churches. What weight with the lovers of antiquity more than of truth, would not a perverted Gospel have possessed, dating from St. Paul's earlier ministry, and denying, with Rome, (as she now is,) justification by faith alone? But what was the exclamation of the Apostle Paul, on witnessing so ancient a dogma, "O foolish

Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the Truth?"

Christianity, gradually corrupted, "by the perpetual canker-worm of Tradition," as Milton well terms it, changed from bad to worse, till it ended by becoming in all respects Antichristianity : at once the opposite, and the counterfeit, of true Religion. Then, in opposition to the spiritual body of true Believers, with Christ, their Heavenly King for their living Head, appeared a noisome and putrefying carcase, composed of an unregenerate mass of the multitude of nations, with the false prophet of the Revelation, the Papal Antichrist for their head and ruler. Instead of those who had the image of God impressed upon their souls, and were sealed by the Holy Spirit of God unto the day of final redemption, arose a semi-pagan horde who forbade to live, all those who had not like themselves the mark of the beast on their foreheads, or on their right hand.

Instead of those who were clothed in the spotless robes of Christ's righteousness, came those who were arrayed in the merits of pretended saints, and were abundantly furnished with the works of supererogation, out of the imaginary storehouse of Popery, warranted by lying legends, and anile fables!—"But this," as Milton says, "shall be our righteousness, our ample warrant, and strong assurance both now, and at the last day, never to be ashamed of, against all the heaped names of angels and martyrs, Councils and Fathers, urged upon us, if we have given ourselves up to be taught by the pure and living precept of God's word only, which without more additions, nay, with a forbidding of them, hath within itself the promise of eternal life, the end of all our wearisome labours, and all our sustaining hopes."

The true Church is founded in belief on God's testimony—the false Church upon unqualified assent to the dogmas of men. "Come and let us reason together," is the invitation of the infinite Jehovah—"Submit without reasoning," says the prophet of darkness. "To the Catholic," says Wiseman, "there is only that one gate, of absolute and unconditional submission to the

teaching of the Church.”—“ A Romanist inquirer perhaps goes to the Priest, and tells him that he cannot find these doctrines in the Bible, his Priest argues with him, and endeavours to convince him that he should shut up the book which is leading him astray—he perseveres; he abandons the communion of the Church of Rome, or, as it is commonly expressed, the errors of that Church, and becomes a Protestant. Now through all this process the man was a Protestant; from the beginning he started with the principle that whatsoever is not in that book, cannot be true in religion, or an article of faith; and that is the principle of Protestantism. He took Protestantism, therefore, for granted, before he began to examine the Catholic doctrine.” It is more amusing than it ought, perhaps, to be on so serious a subject, to observe the opposite advice which Dr. Wiseman gives to Catholics and Protestants. Of the Protestant in the most winning tones he asks, Does any doubt arise in your mind, O cherish it—it may be to you the beginning of eternal life. On the other hand, to the Catholic, with a warning voice he exclaims, Does any doubt arise in your mind, O stifle it at once, otherwise it may lead you to everlasting destruction. While Dr. Wiseman lauds or condemns the same state of mind according as he expects it will issue in accordance or not with his own opinions, the Scriptures encourage and command us to terminate all our doubts by a full inquiry into the Truth. How easy is the mild yoke of Jesus, how heavy the unreasonable tyranny of the Pope—commanding men, like Pharaoh, to make bricks without straw—to believe without evidence, and to obey without any motive, but the base one of fear.

The tenor of the Gospel is “ Hear, and understand, every one of you.” Believe, and be saved. These are the four steps by which we rise into eternal life. The Papacy commands us to believe without understanding, and even without hearing; for submission to what the Church teaches, or to what she will teach, is sufficient to secure our admittance into the fool’s paradise which she promises to her proselytes after death. Millions upon millions in the Church of Rome live and die uninstructed

in the tenets of Rome, and their submission to the Church merely amounts to a promise to believe whenever they shall be required to do so. They submit to the unknown dogmas of their priests, but their priests are in a like condition with themselves. They also have submitted their reason, their senses, their conscience to the Church. But what is the Church in the Roman sense? Simply the priesthood; therefore, one generation of priests, as well as people, submit to a former generation—each consenting to be blindfolded, and to give up the exercise of their mental powers! The *reductio ad absurdum*, proposed to the Atheists, is realized in the Church of Rome. Here is an endless file of blind men, if not in an infinite, in an indefinite series, all trusting themselves to the guidance of each other, and approaching the brink of a precipice, without the least distrust of their safety!

Rome occupies a position altogether untenable, she can neither do *with* the Scriptures, nor *without* them. She is without proofs, and powerless when opposed to a decided infidel; for the proofs of Rome, such as they are, are drawn directly or indirectly from the Bible; the infidel denies the authority of the Bible, or, if he admit it for argument's sake, intimates that the authority of the Bible opposes the claims of Rome. The Church of Rome professes to work miracles; let, therefore, a miracle be wrought—most requisite, where other proof is wanting—but, the miracles of Rome are reserved for those who need them least, the ignorant and the credulous, who are already submitted to her authority! To the Bible, therefore, Rome has recourse, in the first instance, to convince the gainsayers; though, as soon as this is effected, the book is withdrawn, lest Rome herself should be convicted. The Romish doctors are not only aware, but avow, that the reading of the Bible is not favourable to Rome. "How unjust," says Dr. Wiseman, "how unjust it is to say, that the Church has withheld the Bible from the people. But mark the change. The Scriptures have been diffused amongst the faithful, and would have so continued, had not dangerous doctrines sprung up, which taught, that men should throw aside all authority,

and each one judge for himself in religion." This is a fair test; "by their fruits ye shall know them." The result of reading the Bible is fatal to the authority of Rome; the people of the Pope, by its effect upon themselves, being witnesses. The priests, who withdrew the Bible from the people because of those effects, also give their testimony to the consequences of reading the Scriptures. We, the Protestants, also, fully assent, and heartily agree that Popery and the reading of the Scriptures are incompatible.

Under such circumstances, can an appeal be legitimately made to the Scriptures, by those who not only confess, but act upon the confession, that the general tenor of the Scriptures is against them? Can they who withdraw the Scriptures as a whole, plead as their only support a very few detached passages? When the accumulated mass of evidence is against a prisoner, would the jury lay much stress on the attempt to interpret two or three slight incidents in his favour? The Bible, self-interpreted, is against the Romanists, by their own showing; will half-a-dozen of texts, however ingeniously tortured, be ever made, by the most able pleading, a support for so sinking a cause?

The Romanists are in a dilemma which will prove fatal to them whenever the world begins seriously to think upon the subject of religion. Their only escape from infidelity is pleading a few passages of Scripture; and again, their only escape from Protestantism, is employing similar arguments to those of the infidel, and endeavouring to impair the Divine authority and the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures. Of many of the infidels about the time of the Reformation, it would be difficult to say whether they had fabricated their arguments themselves, or had borrowed them from the Papists. The infidels have the less disingenuous task to perform; true to their own principles, or want of principle, they advance by an open path, whereas the Papists must have recourse to the same vicious circle, in which they are perpetually running round, of proving their pretended Church from the Scriptures, and then, of asserting the authority of the Scrip-

tures, from the sanction of their Church. They cannot support their Church but by the misinterpretation of Scripture; for, did they venture to maintain the authority of the Scriptures, without reference to their Church, then, an independent authority would subordinate a derived authority; and the Papal pretensions of balancing the Scriptures by tradition would be at an end.

Two of the cardinal doctrines of Rome, are the Supremacy of the Pope, and Transubstantiation. The claim of the Pope to supremacy rests upon a wide extended chain of sophisms; which however may be gathered up into three heads. First, Peter was supreme over the other Apostles. Secondly, Churches inherited precedency from their founders; and thirdly, Rome was Peter's bishopric. The Romanist writers, with much judgment, dwell greatly on the first head, thus turning the battle from their own gates for a season. We naturally would begin with the third; because, whatever Peter's supremacy might be, were it bestowed upon any other Church, we should have all the acuteness and authority of Rome on our side, and not against us, in reducing that supremacy within scriptural and reasonable limits. Rome may delight in her own fancied supremacy, but would have little pleasure in recognising the ecclesiastical authority which the course of argument might transfer to Antioch or Jerusalem. Neither would the Pope, though styling himself "the servant of servants," greatly rejoice to find himself prostrate at the feet of some obscure patriarch of the East; though with evidently higher title to the successorship of Peter.

To begin, then, with one short sentence, that overthrows, however, all the arrogant claims of Popery. It is not proved that St. Peter was ever at Rome. The path of the Roman apologists here reminds one of the termination of the bridge of Mirza; where the passenger hobbled on for a time from one broken arch to another, but at last met with an unexpected pit-fall, and disappeared. We have only to repeat the sentence—It is not proved that St. Peter was ever at Rome: and the controversy virtually ends. All the gorgeous fabrics of superstition—all the

dreams of universal empire—as far as evidence is concerned, vanish into thin air.

But if there is no proof, may there not be a probability that St. Peter was at Rome; might the Romanists respond, when pleading, “*in forma pauperis*?” The answer obviously is,—In such a momentous case, it is not probabilities, but proof that is required. Still, though not obliged to do so, we may examine the probabilities for a moment. Cardinal Bellarmine pleads that Peter was at Rome, because that nobody doubted his having been there, during fourteen centuries. This is not very powerful logic. Would it have been safe to have doubted it? For how many centuries was there no doubt entertained that the sun moved around the earth? But, it *was* doubted, by Bellarmine’s own showing, for he says it was proved; and we do not prove that of which no doubt is entertained. What are the proofs? Because Peter dates from Babylon, says the credulous Papias; and Rome, by the early Christians, was understood to be the Babylon of the Revelation. This argument cuts both ways, and makes more against Rome than for it. But it is also absurd; for though, in Papias’s days, Rome and Babylon were identified, by the Revelation of St. John; yet the greatest students of prophecy do not date from Apocalyptic, but from real cities; and Peter’s date, from Babylon, if Rome were meant, would not be a fact, but a prophecy, and a prophecy of a prophecy—and a reference to a work which was not yet divulged!

“If Peter were not at Rome, who brought his dead body there?” exclaim both Eusebius and Bellarmine. Certainly not he himself. “I think it superfluous,” says Eusebius, “to seek for testimony that the two Apostles were martyred at Rome, since their monuments are there to testify.” But who will testify to the veracity of the monuments?

Bellarmino adds, “Peter was Bishop of Rome, because Rome is the greatest of bishoprics.” This is mistaking the effect for the cause. Rome was the greatest bishopric, because Peter was supposed to have been its Bishop.

The ultimatum of Bellarmine's questions may be placed last. "If he was not bishop of Rome, of what was he Bishop?" If we may trust his own account, he was one of the many Bishop-Elders of Jerusalem. This, however, is trifling with the triflers, but what misery have these learned trifles not caused to the world!

But suppose Peter to have been at Rome; it would show great ignorance of antiquity to imagine that he would become Bishop of Rome. The Apostles were Bishops and Elders at Jerusalem; elsewhere, they were Apostles alone. They appointed Bishops in all other cities, chosen by, and out of, the Churches in these cities. The Apostles derive their name from being missionaries; and, as has often been observed, had they constituted themselves Bishops, would have given the world the first examples of non-residence.

A second series of fallacies is summed up in the second head we have mentioned—that Churches inherited precedence from their founders. "In the first place," says Dr. Wiseman, "it has been always understood, from the beginning, that whatever prerogatives, though personal, of jurisdiction were brought to a See, by its first Bishop, were continued to his successors." For this we have no proof, merely assertion. The founders of Churches, in general, are not ascertained—their precedence, therefore, if depending upon their founders, would still be in dispute. But the precedence of Churches depended upon a far different principle, their political importance. Rome, Antioch, Alexandria, were determined in the scale of precedence, not by their unknown, or disputed founders, but by their rank in the Roman Empire. Afterwards, they borrowed additional illustration from their supposed founders, and their original foundation. "Peter," continues Dr. Wiseman, "first sat in the chair of Antioch, and that chair has ever retained its dominion over a large portion of the East. In like manner, therefore, if to the See of Rome he brought, not merely the Patriarchate of the West, but the Primacy over the whole world, this accidental jurisdiction became inherent in the See, and heritable, by entail,

to his successors.”—Dr. Wiseman’s opinion may be couched in legal terms, but the decision in favour of Rome is far from being equitable, or rational. Peter sat first, in the council of Apostles at Jerusalem—whether upon a chair or not, is more than doubtful. On Dr. Wiseman’s own principles, all his prerogatives were transferred to the mother Church at Jerusalem.

Antioch could only be the successor of Jerusalem, and Rome, according to Dr. Wiseman’s own account, could only have the lowest claim—and posterior to them both. Therefore let the Pope, his own Cardinal being the judge, despoil himself of his usurped authority, and, on the principles of Rome herself, seek for his legitimate superior in some unknown region of the East.

The Pope is therefore denuded of all advantages from Peter’s pretended Primacy over the other Apostles. He must be a loser instead of a gainer, if Peter’s lineal descendant could be discovered. If argument might prevail, the Pope upon one point might entertain Protestant feelings. Peter however, as is evident from his Epistles, had no knowledge of his own supremacy; and exacts obedience, not to himself, but to the Lord Jesus Christ. He fully understood that Christ, and not Peter, was the rock on which the Church was founded. “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” Peter was the first of those living stones, that were built upon the Rock, Christ. He first, fully confessed Him, among the disciples—he, first, proclaimed Him among the Gentiles; and though especially the Apostle of the circumcision, (by his reception of the Centurion,) he, with his own hands, broke down the wall of partition, which separated the Gentile from the Jew. But what absurdity, as well as what blasphemy, to interpret literally Peter’s being the Rock on which the Church is built—for if so, we must be consistent in our folly, pursue our literal interpretation throughout, and view him as the Christian Janus, in his twofold aspect—first, as the Rock on which the Church is built—and, at the same time, as Satan, the great

adversary of that Church !—" Get thee behind me, Satan ; thou art an offence unto me, for thou savourest not the things of God, but those that be of men."

The second great doctrine of the Romish Church is Transubstantiation. The whole of Catholicity, according to Dr. Wiseman, is founded on and interwoven with Transubstantiation. " The Sacrament of the Eucharist forms the very soul and essence of all practical religion among Catholics."

Here, as in other Roman Catholic tenets, where the evidence should be strong, in proportion to their incredibility, there is properly speaking no argument at all. The proof rests on Christ's saying of the bread, " This is my body ;" but Christ, by the allowance of the Catholics themselves, spoke figuratively as well as literally. We may add, our Saviour generally spoke figuratively, so that when he spoke without a figure, his disciples were surprised :—" Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb." The disciples *must* have understood Christ figuratively—his body and the bread were both, visibly, and separately, before them—not only *must* they have understood the bread as the sign of his body ; but as the sign not of his present body, but of his body to be broken upon the cross. His body was unbroken when he gave them the bread. " This is my body which is broken for you." But, not only was the Saviour's discourse figurative, but that figure was determined by a previous conversation. In the sixth chapter of John we have the origin of that conversation—it sprung out of the miracle of the loaves and fishes—and from the Jews seeking a continuance of the same miraculous supply. Our Saviour announces to them, " I am the bread of life : he that cometh to me shall never hunger ; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." And then, in the 51st verse, " I am the living bread which came down from heaven : if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever : and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

All, even the Romanists, allow that the bread is figurative—but, it follows demonstratively, that if the bread be understood

spiritually, the flesh must be understood spiritually also. Here then the whole pile of superstition is falling to the ground; the Romanists are sensible of it, but have not one buttress to prevent the threatening ruin.—“As a bowing wall shall ye be, and as a tottering fence;”—and “there shall not be found in the bursting thereof a sherd to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal from the pit.”

Dr. Wiseman and the Catholics, reduced to the last extremity, place all their hopes in punctuation. Dr. Wiseman says, “All are agreed as to the next portion of the chapter; that is, from the 26th, so far as about the 50th verse, that in it our Saviour’s discourse is about faith. But at this point enters the material difference of opinion among us. We say that at that verse, or somewhere about it, a change takes place in our Saviour’s discourse.” It is melancholy to see Dr. Wiseman, like the sorcerer Elymas, groping about in darkness, hoping against hope, to find something, somewhere, that will serve his purpose of perverting the Scriptures. It is not wonderful that Dr. Wiseman differs from the Protestants; the Catholics cannot agree among themselves. Dr. Wiseman says, “I feel myself strongly led to suppose that the transition takes place in the 48th verse instead of the 51st verse, where it is commonly put.” The whole edifice of superstition is crumbling into ruins, and the only hope of safety depends upon placing a point! And, infallibility itself, though its all is at stake, has not yet determined where that point should be placed—whether after the 48th, or after the 51st verse!

There is evidently no transition—no break in the discourse. The same terms are continued, in the same sense, and with the same co-relation. In the 51st verse, after the disputed stop, Jesus says, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread he shall live for ever: and the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.” It is remarkable that the Jews fell into the same error with the Catholics, and understood the Saviour literally.—“How can this man give us his flesh to eat?” The Jews, however, shewed more acuteness than the Catholics in

perceiving the absurdity of the words, when taken literally; but the remarks of our Saviour are applicable to both,—63d verse, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.”

As Archbishop Tillotson has shewn long ago, the arguments against Transubstantiation are stronger than the arguments for believing the Scriptures. We have but the testimony of the Apostles for the Christian miracles, and they had the testimony of their senses,—but we have the testimony of our own senses against Transubstantiation,—therefore to prove that Transubstantiation was contained in the Scriptures, would be to prove, not the reality of the doctrine of Transubstantiation, but to disprove the Scriptures. No wonder that Popery leads so directly—so generally—to Infidelity.

But the Rômanists are not satisfied with the native absurdity of Transubstantiation—they have added blasphemy to absurdity. “This doctrine of the Catholic Church,” to use the words of Dr. Wiseman, “which perhaps of all other dogmas has been most exposed to misrepresentation, or, at least, certainly to scorn and obloquy, is clearly defined in the words of the Council of Trent, where we are told, that the Catholic Church teaches, and always has taught, that in the Blessed Eucharist, that which was originally bread and wine, is, by the consecration, changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of our Lord, together with His soul and divinity, in other words, His complete and entire person; which change the Catholic Church has properly called Transubstantiation.” Be it noted, in passing, for it is characteristic, the Body and the Blood are honoured with large letters in Dr. Wiseman’s work, while soul and divinity are without them—and are thus, discreetly, put into the background.

To what depths of absurdity is the fallen mind of man capable of descending! An abused revelation is worse than no revelation at all. The heathen have no such monster creed as this. To believe that bread is flesh and wine blood, contrary to the evidence of our senses, is almost a miracle of folly, and the having ever obtained converts to it seems the nearest approach

to a miracle which Rome could produce. Yet this is not enough for the Papist, he must solace himself with the idea that he is swallowing the flesh of his crucified Saviour, and not only His flesh but His soul—and not only His soul but His divinity! Here indeed we may see the hand of God—they are stricken with judicial blindness, that they should believe a lie more revolting than all the other figments of the human race put together! And what hope can there be (without the most evident Divine interference) that reason will make any impression upon men who adopt the greatest “*reductio ad absurdum*” that ever was, as the leading article of their creed, and the chief corner-stone of their religious system? Around this portent of incredibility all the other Roman Catholic dogmas cluster. “This influence,” says Wiseman, “of our belief in the real presence, upon every part of our practical religion, is too manifest to need any illustration. Why do we, when it is in our power, and why did our forefathers before us, erect sumptuous churches, and lavish on them all the riches of the earth, but that we believe them to be the real tabernacles wherein the Emanuel, the “God with us,” really dwells? Why is our worship conducted with such pomp and solemnity, save that we perform it as a personal service on the incarnate word of God? Why are the gates of our churches, in Catholic countries, open all day, and why do men enter at all hours to whisper a prayer, or prostrate themselves in adoration, but from the conviction that God is there more intimately present than elsewhere, through this glorious mystery?” “The sacred character which the Catholic Priest possesses in the estimation of his flock, the power of blessing with which he seems invested, are both the results of that familiarity with which, in the holy mysteries, he is allowed to approach his Lord. The celibacy to which the clergy bind themselves is but a practical expression of that sentiment which the Church entertains of the unvarying purity of conduct and thought, wherewith the altar should be approached.” And all this in the sole honour and worship of a deified wafer? This surpasses the mysteries of Heathenism; the gorgeous temples,

the clouds of incense, and the crowds of worshippers, all adoring an ox or an ape enshrined in the inmost sanctuary.

The Romanists object, and justly, to the position, and foundation, which a part of the Church of England has assumed; as built upon the Bible, and the Fathers of the first three centuries. They have clearly pointed out, in the principle expressed in the maxim, "*Nemo repente turpissimus fuit*," that the Church could not be pure in the year 299, and exceedingly corrupt in the year 301. Such a transformation would almost amount to the Roman doctrine of Transubstantiation—by which process alone a pure community could have become antichristian in so brief a space of time. We agree with the Romanists, that the law of continuity holds in the Church as well as in nature, and that large bodies do not suddenly change their characters, except when placed under strikingly new circumstances. But we do not hold that the primitive Church was free from error, except in the case of the Apostles, and other inspired persons, themselves. Even in the times of the Apostles there were many antichrists. The Apostles erected the Churches as beacons, blazing over a stormy ocean, holding forth the Light of Life. But of course the light was brightest at its centre, and became shaded towards its circumference. All were not Apostles—all were not Teachers—all were not even taught! Many mixed the good seed of the word with the weeds which were the previous occupants of the soil. The fallow ground not being thoroughly broken up, the wheat interweaved its spikes, with the thorns and the thistles that still continued to grow there. From the first, Judaizing tendencies were displayed in the Churches—and, as the heathen converts became more numerous, there was also a revival of Gentile errors. We have pointed out, in noticing the martyrdom of Polycarp, a tendency to pass from hero-worship to martyr-worship. We also noted, that the early superstitious veneration attached to the Cross, had attracted the criticisms of the more sharp-sighted Pagans. But these evils, and many more, naturally increased in the course of time. The Christians, when deprived of the Apostles, their inspired guides, towards the close

of the first century, laboured under many disadvantages, from which we, at the present times, through the mercy of God, have been delivered. The early Christians had, indeed, the Old Testament; but, too fancifully interpreted by uninspired commentators. They had also the New—first in parts—and then as a whole—and not unperused, for their quotations are early, and numerous. Yet, they were an illiterate people, as we formerly observed, when alluding to their monuments; and, though warned against the old leaven—and the vain traditions derived from their fathers, they were very apt to mix the workings of their own imperfectly regulated minds, and the recollections of a former religious belief, with the pure oracles of God.

We ourselves, who have the Bible by our side, have continual need of reviving its impressions on our hearts, by opening and re-opening its sacred pages, and inquiring of every new religious notion that springs up in the mind, from whence it proceeds—whether from the word of God, and then we gladly receive it; or whether merely from the workings of our own mind, and then we would as gladly discard it, as part of that lumber of human inventions, and will-worship, which in past times has so often encumbered the truth.

In the first ages little of this caution was used. The test of truth—the Bible—was not so ready at hand, to be applied to every notion that demanded admittance. As in the parable of the sower, and as in the case of the thorny ground hearers, the crop was too motley and diversified for profitable use. Half understood tenets, imperfectly recollected traditions—arguments that ended in fancies, and similitudes that were mistaken for arguments, filled the mind with a variegated cloud-scenery that obscured the brightness of the Sun of Righteousness.

Then the doors of the metaphoric Church were flung wider and wider open. A camel with a whole load of antiquated rubbish might enter fearlessly in. Converts were succeeded by half-converts, and these in their turn were succeeded by a multitude, Christian in name, but Pagan at heart; who, though exorcised by holy water, introduced their own lying spirits into

the desecrated churches, instead of the spirit of the truth. The Church was changed without any sudden change on the part of the disciples who composed it—it was the want of change of its votaries which produced an apparent change, but a real permanence. Christians and Pagans joining together in an outward union, Christianity and Paganism, in the too natural course of events, coalesced. Romanism then appeared in its full development (with respect to the mass) as Paganism baptized; with respect to the more thoughtful, displaying the combining elements in every varying proportion—as it does down to the present hour, some being almost entirely Christian—and others almost entirely Pagan, with every intermediate shade of gradation.

One tenet alone was absolutely required—submission to the Church; and but one rite of initiation—baptism; which was supposed to confer regeneration. As transubstantiation is demonstrated at once to be false, by the evidence of the senses; so, baptismal regeneration is perpetually confuted by universal experience. The Apostle could say to the primitive converts, enumerating the classes of the greatest sinners among the Gentiles, with the peculiar enormities of their sin, “Such *were* some of you;” but, to the baptismally regenerated of Spain and Italy, we may say, and from their own authorities—Such *are* many of you—with, perhaps, sins of yet deeper turpitude than prevailed in the heathen times of these respective countries.

Baptism is connected in the Scriptures with regeneration—but not as the Romanists connect them. They are guilty of the fallacy of the “*τοῦτον πρότερον*”—in plain English, of putting the cart before the horse. In ancient times the regenerated were invited to be baptized—believe and be baptized—belief being the first act of the regenerated mind. With the Romanists persons are baptized in order to be regenerated, but with a woful want of the expected result.

It is wonderful how scriptural Dr. Wiseman is on the subject of baptism, when he hopes in this way to perplex Protestants. “The Apostles were simply told to baptize all nations; but how

do you prove from this that baptism is to be administered to infants? Yet the English Church Articles prescribe infant baptism. Or whence comes the warrant for departing from the literal meaning of the word, which means *immersion*, and the adoption of mere affusion, or sprinkling of the water? There may have been infants in the families or houses spoken of as baptized—probably so; but this is only conjecture, and not proof; surely not enough to base an important practice on, which, without better authority, should seem to contradict our Saviour's command, that faith should precede or accompany baptism. 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.' For in a positive institution, wholly depending on the will of the legislator, positive authority is requisite for any modification of the prescribed act. Where is the security for these modifications, if not in the explanation of the Church, conveyed to us by her ancient practices? And thus in like manner, if there be not clearly mentioned in Scripture a place of purgation, but still if we find forgiveness of sins in the next world spoken of,—if we find that prayers are beneficial for those that have died,—that nothing defiled can enter the kingdom of heaven,—and that it is incompatible with God's justice that every sin should consign the offender to eternal punishment,—we have the germs of a doctrine which only require to be unfolded; we have the members and component parts of a complete system, which, as in baptism, require only further explanation and combination from the Church of God."

The allusion to Penance and Purgatory in the above quotation from Dr. Wiseman, reminds us of the gradual change which took place from truth to error. The Gospel proclaims repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. In the word of our translation, repentance, there is the beginning of an obscuration of the meaning of the original. We are called to (*μετάνοια*) a change of mind towards God—to think of Him, not as such an one as ourselves, but as a God of infinite holiness; and His law, as a law of infinite purity: and to regard ourselves as in an utterly lost condition; undone, and unclean, in His sight—deprived of all hope

from ourselves, having no health in us, or power to restore ourselves, and shut up to the Divine and complete salvation, that is to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ. In our language we have many excellent treatises, both in Essays (as in the Rambler,) and in Sermons, upon repentance—excellent, in all but this, that theirs is not the exact repentance (or, *μετάνοια*) of the Scriptures. How secret and almost imperceptible at the first are the aberrations of the mind, from the truth of the Gospel, as it reverts from the light of Heaven to the light of nature—from revealed religion to imperfect natural religion—and from obscured natural religion, to the shades of superstition.

First, *μετάνοια* passes gently into our modern repentance, then repentance into remorse, where there is more of the feelings, and less of the intellect; and where the pain of remorse is more valued than the change of views—and pain, being considered as meritorious, easily passes from the pangs which rend the mind, to the penance which tortures the body. But, after all, the self-inflicted austerities of Romanism, and all the acts of its saints, as has often been observed, fade away before the astounding penances of the ancient Hindoos, and other Eastern nations.

With Penance, another fountain of error combined its bitter waters. Prayers for the dead—followed by a Purgatory, borrowed from the ancient heathens. The change also in this case was very gentle, as may be deciphered from the ancient monuments. First arose a wish, rather than a prayer—breathed after the departing soul, and the Pagan expression, “may the earth lie light upon you,” was changed into the Christian valediction, “may you find rest with Jesus,” thus exchanging the “*sit tibi terra levis,*” for “*sit tibi requies cum Jesu.*” But it is difficult, even for a true Christian, earnestly engaged in prayer for a dying friend, to observe that solemn and eternal silence before God, when the tree once falls to the ground: and soon prayer, not only before, but after death, was offered up for the welfare of those who had left this mortal life; and (with the approbation of Tertullian, and the usage of many of the Church at the commencement of the third century) supplication continued to be

renewed on each anniversary day of his death, for the welfare of the deceased. With this was combined the doctrine of penance—one error readily joining hand with another. The penance might have been imperfect on earth, but there was time to complete it between the day of death, and the day of judgment; and prayer for the dead was supposed at once to accelerate the operation of penance in another world, and to afford to the sufferer, under this imaginary discipline, intervals of repose and refreshment—"refrigerium"—a term which we may well blush to find in the earliest, but ill-judging Latin Father, Tertullian—a term, which gives us a pre-intimation of the future purgatorial fires. We take some pains in noticing the gradual increments of superstition, because, while we concede the Romish argument of continuity, we can shew a series of gradual, but not sudden changes, in the slow, but perpetual evolution of the transformation of opinions; and prove that "the Infallible Church" is both very mutable, and very fallible.

Another instance of the gradual rise of error may be taken from what has been called Mariolatry, or the worship of the deified Virgin. In the catacombs, the earliest rude attempts at depicting figures on the wall consist in representations by the Christians, of the prophet Jonas; a similarity being felt between their situation and his, when the earth, with its bars, seemed about him for ever. The next is Adam and Eve, with the tree of knowledge and its forbidden fruit, "whose mortal taste" had introduced so much wo and suffering into the world; and of which, those who took refuge in these excavations were so largely partakers. The third is the figure of Mary, with the infant Saviour; at a time so early, when, perhaps, images served rather for remembrance than worship. Again the same object may be brought more prominently forward, and in this instance for a commencement of image worship; but, where the mother of the Saviour only shared indistinctly in the veneration paid to her Son. In the latest representation there appears to be the beginning of the Virgin's supposed intercession—she seems to turn her ear to the worshipper, and her eyes to God, as if in

part the mediator, or at least the medium, of presenting the sup-
plications. After the period of the catacombs, the Virgin is
identified with the woman of the Revelation, clothed with the
sun, crowned with the stars—and in a form and position equi-
valent to the ancient Apotheosis. Lastly, as in the picture of
Rubens, (noticed by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and which we have
cited in "The Errors regarding Religion,") the Virgin takes the
place of the Saviour, not only as the Queen of Heaven, but as
the great intercessor and mediator—which office he has resigned
to her—himself to take the place of the stern Judge—the
Christian Jupiter with the thunderbolts of vengeance "in his
red right hand."

We have thus pointed out four refutations of Romanism.
First, in the Bible itself, and its all-sufficiency. Secondly, in
the failure of Tradition, and of an authenticated Succession.
Thirdly, in the utter want of proof for the Pope's Supremacy—
for Transubstantiation, and Baptismal Regeneration. A fourth
series of refutations we are now pointing out in the origin and
genesis of Romish rites and tenets, which might be fully ex-
hibited by the two works we so greatly desire—a genuine
history of the Church, and a succinct account of the Christian
Fathers. A fifth refutation of Popery would arise from the
Pagan origin of the Romish worship, as we have briefly, but we
think conclusively pointed out by short extracts from Middleton.
Middleton's admirable letter from Rome, admirable, notwith-
standing some slight taint of infidelity, appears to us an un-
answerable demonstration of the heathenish nature of the Romish
worship, and it remains without an answer worth noticing, to
the present day. Might it not be advantageously circulated,
leaving out one or two objectionable passages? Excellent as it
is, it would not exclude a larger work upon the subject, pointing
out, on a wider scale, all the sources, or most of them, from
which Rome has borrowed her far-derived opinions.

We shall merely indicate several other topics, which might
either be treated in one large work, or discussed in separate
tracts; and the discussion of each of which might be more or

less subversive of Romish superstition : such as the Romish altar and the Romish sacrifice—Nuns and Nunneries, Monks and Monasteries—Confession to the Priest, as compared with confession to God—and, above all, the venality of modern even more than ancient Rome, "*Omnia venalia Romæ*," and the demoralizing influence of Romanism, wherever it has prevailed. Three subjects might require a more extended notice ; the pretence to miracles—the spirit of persecution, whether openly exhibited in holy wars, or secretly exercised in the Inquisition—and lastly, and most important of all, the character branded upon Popery by prophecy—the divine point of view in which the mystery of iniquity is regarded, the coming of approaching judgments, and the final and irreversible doom.

With regard to Miracles, we may observe Rome pretends to no new revelation—the Pope, or the Pope in council, or the whole Church, are infallible, it is not known which, nor has Infallibility herself finally determined where is her proper abode. But Infallibility utters no new oracles—the Pope, when properly advised, only picks out from the past, that which is infallibly applicable to the present. The Church of Rome, being immutable, as well as infallible, is confined, in appearance at least, ever to maintain the same tenets. But a pretence to miracles, without the pretence to a new revelation, carries with it its own confutation. Every true miracle supposes a divine revelation, and every true revelation proceeds upon miracles. The laws of nature are the language of God to mankind—they proclaim the divine existence and attributes—and are also the guides of man, in this, his mortal life. On the uniformity of these laws, and of this divine language, all our knowledge, and even our existence depends. Any stop—any change in the order of nature, and in the system of signals placed before our view, imports immediately a new communication from the Author of Nature. Miracles are the strongest of all calls on the attention of mankind ; nothing could be more absurd than the supposition of a miracle without a message. A miracle by itself, could only perplex and astound. It is the

message which accompanies it, that gives it intelligible import, and fixes its real signification.

But what do the Romish miracles import, or what message do they bring?—the latest news of a winking Madonna, or the introduction of some new saint into a calendar, already overcrowded with impostors.

The subject of Persecution might demand a separate treatise for itself. This is one of Rome's most vulnerable points, and she is perfectly sensible of it. Dr. Wiseman gives his reasons for declining to enter upon the subject of Prophecy. "I must avoid touching upon that view, however popular it may be, which pretends to see in the Catholic Church the foul characteristics attributed to the enemies of Christ in the Apocalypse" —"because I would not profane the holiness of this place with the blasphemous calumnies which I should have to repeat," &c. A very easy way of getting rid of an overwhelming weight of accusations and arguments. But what excuse had he for passing over in deep silence the subject of persecution?—he could neither deny the rivers of blood which the Church of Rome had shed, in what she profanely called Holy Wars; nor the unspeakable tortures more secretly practised in the Inquisition. Nor yet could he boldly avow them, with any hope of reconciling them with the spirit of an age, which, at least, is comparatively humane. His only refuge, therefore, is silence; and that silence is the most profound confession of guilt. There are some things which it is easier to do than to say; and Rome is not ashamed to act that which her advocate is reluctant to apologize for! Unchanged in heart, and untaught by experience, Rome is shewing the same fiendish temper as ever, in the persecution of the Madiail.

We have need of writings to bring to remembrance both the elder and more modern atrocities of Papal Rome—to reanimate and raise from their tombs the victims of the crusade against the Albigenses—that early reform which was extinguished in blood! And to recall to mind the immense loss of life occasioned by the cruelties of Rome and of the Spaniards in the Netherlands. Not only should the victims of Rome but her in-

struments be brought before the view—those armies gathered under the standard of the Cross, from the dregs of every nation ; and who, under the pretence of fighting for the purity of religion, were indulging in cruelties which make the blood run cold, and in vices whose turpitude forbids them to be named. The massacre of St. Bartholomew has had an answer and a recompense in the French Revolution ; but the blood which was shed throughout Europe, has never yet been fully avenged. Let the cry of injured humanity again awake, from pages that would render justice, alike, to the oppressed and the oppressor. Let us not be unmindful, for God is mindful of his people—and “the day of vengeance is in his heart.”

In “The Errors regarding Religion,” we pointed out a complete demonstration, from the great Dr. Clarke, that Papal Rome is identical with Apocalyptic Babylon. So strong was this identity in the minds of the early Christians, after the publication of the Apocalypse, that (as we have seen) Papias contended that Peter must mean Rome, when he dated from Babylon ! Apart from general commentaries upon prophecy, we should be benefited by a short manual, or tractate, condensing the prophetic views respecting the apostasy, and final desolation of Rome. Placing Rome, and all her abominations, in the light of Scripture, we have the point of view in which Jehovah himself regards the great corruptress of the nations ; and the retributive doom which He is preparing for all her spiritual sorceries, and all her accumulated crimes. The Divine words which we shall cite, do not need any human comment, and we shall select a few verses without any addition of our own. “I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations,” &c. “And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great,” &c. “And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus : and when I saw her, I

wondered with great admiration." "The woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." "And, after these things, I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the Great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

Rome does not stand alone—there is entwined with her being the existence of another foul spirit—that of Infidelity. We cannot fully understand the action of each without taking into view the counteraction of the other. But first, we premise a few words on the present state and statistics of the Romanist religion. The numbers of the Papists are variously given, by different authorities, and in general the amount assigned is a mere guess; but they may be computed to be somewhat below a hundred and fifty millions. All these are supposed to exhibit the uniformity, or, as they term it, the unity of their religion. No supposition could be more contrary to the real state of facts. They possess the same name, but not the same creed. One that was fond of paradoxes might maintain, that instead of the Romanists being numerous, there is no real Romanist in existence. Dr. Wiseman, as we saw before, gives truly, according to his own principles, the rule, that for Catholics there is "but one gate, of absolute, unconditional submission to the teaching of the Church." He that doubts is condemned—he that modifies is condemned. But doubts have entered into all minds; and the tenets of Rome are modified, at least in appearance, to suit the taste of the times. There are many days, and many occasions, in which the strictest Catholic is holding loosely by his Church, though prepared fully to re-enter it, at the approach of sickness and death. But, omitting such considerations, we

may observe, that the larger number of Catholics are excluded, by the rules of the Catholic Church itself, from the number of its true adherents. That Church (as we observed, in "The Errors regarding Religion") has laid down regulations, for example, which separate Catholic image-worshippers from idolaters. These rules are not observed by the illiterate and uninstructed majority of the Catholics, who, in consequence, by the voice of the decrees of their own Church, should be assigned to the denomination of Pagans. This would deprive Popery of three-fifths of its imaginary numbers. "Pour les Images," says Bossuet, "le Concile de Trente défend expressément de croire aucune divinité, ou vertu, pour laquelle on les doit révéler; de leur demander aucune grace et d'y attacher sa confiance, et veut que tout l'honneur se rapporte aux originaux qu'elles représentent;" and with respect to these "originaux," the Saints themselves, he adds, "au reste, jamais aucun catholique n'a pensé que les Saints connussent, par eux-mêmes, nos besoins; ni même les desirs pour lesquels nous leur faisons de secrettes prières. L'Eglise se contente d'enseigner, avec toute l'Antiquité, que ces prières sont très profitables à ceux qui les font, soit que les Saints les apprennent par le ministère et le commerce des anges," &c.

Will it be believed for a moment, that a simple, illiterate man, goes through such a mental process, when prostrating himself before an image, as that which Bossuet indicates? "Judging himself," says Bossuet, "not sufficiently 'agréable' to God to present his requests immediately to Him, he makes a pretence of addressing them to the saints, though he well knows that the saints cannot hear him, that it is God alone who is listening to him, and, who by an immediate 'revelation,' or by 'the ministry of an angel,' must first make known these prayers to the saints, in order that he may receive their petitions again presented to him, in a more agreeable, and roundabout way." But it is abundantly evident that Romanists in general have no such subterfuges, but address the saints in the full belief that they are continually present, and ever listening to their petitions. And, that the images are worshipped, fully as

much as the originals they represent, is manifest from a glance into any Romish Cathedral, both by the way in which the images are worshipped, and by the manner in which they are spoken of. If it was the saint and not the image that was worshipped, it would matter little which of these images was resorted to, but some of them are much more highly esteemed than others. And that a virtue is believed to reside in these images, in spite of the Council of Trent, the miraculous stories that are attached to many of them sufficiently prove—if any proof were necessary.

A second great class of the Romanists, who are not really Romanists, may be termed the Latitudinarians. From personal and confidential communication with some who are considered to belong to the priestly party, we were enabled to say to them, that in many respects, we were more Romanists than themselves; to which they also assented. They do not believe in the Atonement, though it is a doctrine of the Church of Rome—they scarcely believe in the absolute Deity of Christ. They believe that both heretics and Romanists will be saved by good works—and they believe that good works are of more importance than creeds. In one thing they do believe, in the advantage of the unity of the Church, and they conform to this, and act and live accordingly. We have but one unity left, say the Italians, when urged to confess their real opinions, Ecclesiastical Unity, and would you deprive us of this?

To the Latitudinarians must be added the Infidels of every shape and hue, who are still professing Catholics. A wounded Italian student, nursed by some Christians, confessed that he had no religious principles, and that all the numerous professors of the university to which he belonged were Atheists, except two. An Italian Ecclesiastical paper said that Italy was unfavourable to the growth of Pantheism—Alas! for their ignorance! Italy at the revival of letters was the nurse of Pantheism—and at the present moment, among the patriots of Italy, Pantheistic notions prevail, which, however, they are willing to reserve as an inner creed—and, maintaining the Unity of the

Church, (a favourite idol with all,) they propose to reduce Catholicism to what it was in earlier and simpler times ; restraining all persecution, with regard either to civil or religious freedom of opinion.

There remains only the third class, who may strictly be considered as Catholics, including the priesthood, of course—"Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth," &c. Add to these, those that are led by the priesthood—the aged devout men, and "honourable women not a few"—enthusiastic converts—and fanatical monks—those that are terrified on account of their great sins, and those who are attracted on account of their great gains. All these, and a motley crowd accompanying them, are a great host when viewed alone ; but are much outnumbered by the mixed multitude, who follow the camp for a while, but whose allegiance is doubtful and precarious.

Thus the forces of the Papal army form an immense, but as we see an incongruous assemblage. They are like the armies of the Persian kings of old, collected from many distant provinces, but many of whom serve from compulsion, not choice. They occupy a weak and indefensible position that to the eye of an experienced antagonist almost insures defeat—part are well trained, and obedient to the word of command, and truly formidable both from their numbers and their discipline—the Priesthood. But there is one remarkable and encouraging fact, though Rome, in her trained Priesthood, has good and experienced veterans, she is deficient in generals. The very principle of blind submission, and implicit obedience, which is favourable to producing good troops, takes away the chance of raising eminent commanders. Even the Jesuits produce no distinguished auxiliaries to Rome—and the whole body of the Romanists are crafty but not wise. Skilful to avail themselves of the blunders of others, but very prone to make still greater blunders of their own. "Our Cardinals," said an acute Roman Catholic to us, "are mere old women, they know nothing of the real state of the world they live in ; your silliest politicians are wiser—they at least read the newspapers." There are exceptions—and

Cardinal Wiseman is one—would we were as sure of his honesty as of his ability !

Popery and Infidelity have always led to each other. The Papists at one time encouraged Infidelity, fearing men should embrace Protestantism, and trusting that wearied out with the conflicting opinions and prolonged uncertainty of infidel speculations most would again return for repose into the bosom of an infallible Church ; nor were they disappointed. Numbers, after the time of the Reformation, noted for their free-thinking and free-sayings, thought it safest to sink into their last sleep, drugged with the opiates which Rome prepares for her votaries. But the oracle of Wolsey became more and more manifestly true—Rome must destroy the press, or the press will destroy Rome. The numbers of free-thinkers increased. Infidelity became a permanent power, and its disciples began to reject, with scorn, both the fears and the hopes presented to a death-bed.

In all human affairs there is action and reaction, and there is a continued war between the past and the future. Rome has her roots in the past alone. If once the edifice of superstition were overthrown, it could never be reconstructed on the same foundations. Infidelity, and its ally the extreme democracy, have their roots, and derive their chief nourishment, from a state of things which is not yet fully developed. As Rome leans to the past, so Infidelity rests upon the future—and the future must prove the conqueror in the strife. The lapse of time, of itself, adds to the strength of the one, and diminishes the resources of the other. That the recent revival of the Church of Rome is not action but re-action, is evidenced by considering the countries where Romanism is stationary and where it is progressive. In countries where Rome has prospered long, she prospers no more—the apparent success of Romanism in these, is a political, not a religious triumph. Where it has long been planted it has exhausted the soil and shews symptoms of decay. It is not prospering in Spain or in Italy. It is progressive in France, where the mind, wearied out with fantastic systems, seeks a brief repose in an assumed credulity ; and where the politician,

finding no base for his operations amid the endless shiftings of Infidelity, seeks to erect his renovated structures on the massive, though unsound foundations of superstition. There is growth, there is greenness, in the Upas tree of Popery, but at the centre it is dead—rotten at the core. Its new life is confined to the rind, and it wants internal vigour to resist the storms that are ready to assail it. Popery has exhausted the religious feelings in the countries where it has long prevailed; but, entering a fresh soil, it still finds the materials upon which superstition, as well as religion, can work—moral principles not altogether discarded; and a conscience, though darkened, still in some measure alive to the importance of eternity. But, as the materials which are thrown up from the depth of the sea to form new islands are immediately subjected, as they emerge, to the erosion of the waves, so the recent acquisitions of superstition, whether in France, in England, or in America, have but a brief period of existence assigned them, and will be again swept off and carried away by the waves of doubt, and the conflicting currents of opinion.

Popery, encouraging an abject blindfold submission, and blending the sublimest truths with the most pitiful fables, produces, by a necessary revulsion, a disbelief of every principle. When doubt begins, there is no limit to its progress in minds from which every rational principle has been removed, and where reason, by disuse, has lost its legitimate exercise: and nations, deprived of moderate liberty, and of the temperate use of their rational faculties, violently vibrate, with scarce a pause, between despotism and democracy, superstition and Infidelity.

Thus Infidelity and superstition have at once a joint and conflicting existence, each springing out of the other, and each endeavouring to destroy the other, like the spectre fiends in Dante.

“ Ivy ne’er clasp’d
A dodder’d oak, as round the other’s limbs
The hideous monster interwin’d his own.
Then, as they both had been of burning wax,

Each melted into other, mingling hues,
That which was either, now, was seen no more.”*

For the mind, in the revolutions of states and of opinions, rapidly passes from believing all, to believing nothing; and again, worn out by a contest that has no end, and finding nothing stable to rest upon, either in institutions or principles, makes a sudden transition, back to its ancient creed. But though individual combatants may change from side to side, the conflict of opinions continues; success, by the re-action it occasions, leading to defeat, and defeat, from rallied forces, changed into victory. Popery and Infidelity are carrying on an internecine contest. Like the two serpents in the ancient romance of Merlin—

“The red dragon and the white
Hard together gan they smite,
With mouth, paw, and with tail :
Between hem was full hard batail ;
That the earth dinned tho,
And loathly weather wax thereto.
So strong fire they casten anon,
That the plains thereof shone,
And sparkled about, so bright
As doth the fire from thunder-light
So they fought, for sooth to say
All the long summer’s day.”

We have much to regret that true Christianity is not yet on the field, with all her collected forces, to profit by the strokes which her mutual enemies are dealing to each other. But so it has ever been—the good cause is the last to raise its banner, and advance its lances, that the glory of the victory might belong to God, and no part of it to man.

Both Popery and Infidelity have their strong points, which render the decision delayed, and the battle prolonged. Popery has very deep roots, alike in the past, and in our fallen nature. When Christianity was said to have ascended the throne of Constantine, the fate of Paganism seemed to be decided; but Pagan-

* Cary’s Dante.

ism was only displaced, not banished—and, under a Christian disguise, resumed her ancient supremacy. The Idolatry of Rome, which has thus survived a former moral world, and with such tenacity has asserted its place in the human mind, when thrones and sceptres have crumbled away, will not yield to an ordinary onset, and will only perish amid the ruins of modern institutions. Infidelity must call another Titan with a hundred arms to her aid—the all up-heaving-democracy, before the death struggle is ended. What Infidelity at present wants, and Rome possesses, is organization. Romish superstition and European monarchies have seemed to yield at the first onset of Infidelity and democracy—they have appeared struck with sudden bewilderment, desiring to fly, but not knowing whither, while shock after shock from the revolutionary volcano was making the earth reel under their feet, and all the ancient fabrics of despotism and superstition—Temples and Palaces seemed ready to topple to the ground. But the moment of victory was also the moment of defeat. To the insurgent powers of unorganized democracy, a battle gained is equivalent to a battle lost, for it is unimproved. They are like the servant enriched by Law's Mississippi Scheme, and the fortunate purchaser of a carriage, but who, instead of entering it, in the hurry and exultation of the moment, mounted behind it. Caught up by the whirlwind of revolutionary events, they seem never at home in the uneasy and uncertain elevation of their new position; and, even when freed from their former rulers, seem searching for something they have lost, and set out, like Diogenes, in quest of a master!

Kings and Priests have, in our days, and especially since 1848, been suddenly displaced, and as marvellously re-placed—God, as it were, looking down from heaven to see if any would learn wisdom, in a world which is so quickly shifting its scenes, and changing its actors. All had an opportunity of beginning a course of constitutional freedom and consequent security; legally restrained from doing evil, but with ample powers of doing good—all might have had the word of God peacefully circulating throughout their dominions; entering quietly as the

morning light into the midst of the darkness, and without noise or disturbance restoring anew the face of the moral world. The mass of the people, and even "a great company of the Priests," seemed disposed, at one time, to welcome with gratitude the boon of moderate civil and religious freedom. The kings have conspired against their own concessions, and broken every pledge, and every oath solemnly sanctioned before heaven and before men. They are preparing a dreadful retribution.

Wherever Infidelity and Democracy have been skilfully organized, the results have shewn, that the combinations of power and Popery were unable to withstand them. Protestantism had failed, when it seemed about to cover France with its doctrine, from the want of combined and sustained effort; and the Jesuits had shewn that error, with union, is more powerful than truth without it. Any ground gained by the individual efforts of Infidelity, would probably, in the same manner, have been regained by the Church of Rome, but the combination of infidel talent connected with the French *Encyclopédie*, proved too hard for the decrepitude of Rome, and the Bourbon dynasty; and the various clubs, first irreligious, then political, scattered their publications with a system and an energy unknown before, and sowed the whole soil of France with the teeth of the dragon. Infidelity then had leaders such as it cannot boast at present—Voltaire, Rousseau, Hume, and Gibbon; what Bacon says of the Jesuits, we would rather say of such men, "Would they had been ours, would they had been Christians!" Protestantism, failing in its vital powers, had ceased to contend with Rome; Voltaire, Rousseau, and other infidels, have given it, at least, a wound, the scar of which it will carry to its grave. Had that wound been dealt by the hand of Protestantism, it would probably have proved mortal, but Infidelity cannot retain the ground it has gained, it conquers but cannot permanently subjugate, and unless true principles are supplied, superstition quickly recovers the dominion it has lost. The grandchildren of "the philosophers" have many of them returned to the confessional; whereas, if Voltaire had pointed out the truths of the Gospel

with the same force with which he exposed the errors of Popery, and done so in the spirit of the Gospel, he might probably have been the author of a lasting reformation through the south of Europe.

Infidelity has no distinguished leaders at the present moment, and yet its opinions are rapidly spreading. What greater proof can be given of its force and vitality? and what an influence would it exert did God, in His just indignation, permit that some great minds should arise who could avail themselves to the uttermost of the great and growing resources of scepticism and anti-religion, and should summon to their aid all the spirits of destruction, who are looking upon Europe, already, as their future field of battle and carnage!

The Pantheistic infidels, now the prevailing portion of the tribe, were supposed to have had a common leader, for a brief period, during the eminence of Hegel, but this was rather coincidence than cause and effect—like the pre-established harmony of Leibnitz, where the thoughts of the soul, and the movements of the body correspond, without each having any direct influence on the other.

There is much of the spirit of the serf in the soul of the free-thinker. Leibnitz in deducing mental philosophy too closely from the mere expansion of the intellect, in opposition to the over-sensible and over-material theories which prevailed around him, fell, as usual, into the opposite extreme. From the activity of the intellect alone, we cannot deduce the reality of nature, or of the Deity. Hence, when the system is pushed to its utmost extent, the human mind swells beyond its due dimensions; and, instead of being a part of creation, and under the Creator, becomes a centre of existence to itself—the subjective displaces the objective, and the dreamer and his dreams become the sole tenants of an unreal and godless world. There was the germ of this error in Leibnitz himself—it was more developed in Kant, and it fully expanded in Fichte—where I, the creator and the created, predominated in the infinite void—nor could Schelling return to any but a shadowy and pantheistic

nature—and Hegel's Logos, or rather deified logic, a process of thought, (and thought with him is existence,) never ending as never beginning, carries the original defects of Leibnitz to that degree of absurdity and profanity which might seem to augur that the extreme of darkness and distance had been reached, and that the erratic understanding was on its return towards the Sun of Truth. How few are original and independent thinkers! and how pitiful is it that philosophers are unable to diverge into a new track, but that the error of the first must be pursued and exaggerated by the followers as long as space remains for deviation!

There was no community between the mind of Hegel, and the mind of many of his followers, yet he seemed a common centre which for a time connected them all; nor is the blind submission of Rome without its parallel in the servile admission of principles by the mass of the incredulous, and in the implicit assent yielded to the leaders they have assumed.

Pantheism, or the belief in the deified universe, stretching through all the wide void which separates Atheism from Theism, assumes as many forms as the one imaginary substance which it worships. It is thus well calculated to rally under its standard all the scattered forces of Infidelity, and to give one master-key to the interpretation of its Babel variety of dialects. The system is prepared—the intellect may be at hand that will fully actuate it; and, though Hegel was little able to avail himself, from his want of popular talents, of the proud pre-eminence to which he was rather fortuitously raised, some mightier, and more versatile mind may soon occupy the vacant throne, and shew how great a power of darkness has entered this lower world, and is ready to expel the other lying spirits from their ancient seats, in order to reign in their stead.

Philosophy itself, at times, wears, unconsciously, an adverse aspect towards Christianity. It is too apt to regard God as the creator only, and not also as the preserver of the universe—whose power and presence are as much required to maintain the laws of nature, as originally to impose them. Hence God

seems chiefly to reign beyond the bounds of nature and of time. As progressive discoveries enlarge the boundaries of the world, and augment its duration, the Deity appears to recede farther and farther into the profundities of space, and towards the confines of eternity.

But Christianity, on the other hand, while proclaiming "Glory to God in the highest," brings Him exceedingly nigh to us; and while it displays the perfections of the Deity, draws us to Him in the most intimate union. Christianity and philosophy, in regard to the Deity, have therefore an inverse action, and breathe an opposite spirit, unless they be duly blended together. We do not speak of genuine philosophy, but of that ordinary science, which investigates only the origin of things, and then accepts the laws of Nature, as a substitute for its Author. But in addition to that mistaken spirit of philosophy, which rears no altars, or raises them only "to the unknown God," there are the surges of conflicting and opposing opinions rising higher, and breaking in with more force upon the received boundaries of established creeds. Most thinking men may recollect the shock which their minds sustained when endeavouring to reconcile the account of Moses with the true astronomy of the heavens—and, as a second shock of an earthquake is always more dreaded than the first, so many Christians will remember the, perhaps, still deeper mental agitation which they felt, in reconciling Genesis with the discoveries of Geology. But these are not the only sources from which unbelief, in the future, will derive its armory of weapons. There are days coming which will try every opinion—whether it be of God, or whether it be of man; and these days are close at hand. God appoints us trials in our minds, as well as in our outward affairs. There will be a great shaking in the theories of philosophy, as well as in the constitution of kingdoms. All these trials will serve a good purpose. They will destroy superstition, and they will establish religion, by purifying it, and causing it to pass through the fires. The mortal will perish, the immortal will remain.

Old worlds subside beneath the waves, in order that newer

formations may more than supply their place—old things in the moral world pass away in order that all things may become new. An age of revolutions often crosses the path of human society, by the appointment of God, but tempered, with respect to the believer, by the promise, “As thy day is, so shall thy strength be.” The source of our trial exists in the rapidity of our progress. New sciences are bursting into birth upon every side. Can we be surprised that they are contrary to religion, in their first aspect, in as far as they often are contrary to truth?

Youthful productions are not seldom out of proportion—like the cubs of the bear, they require time and care to fashion them into shape. But like all the violent energies of Nature, Infidelity, with its giant brother Democracy, possesses the towering structure, but not the enduring life, which characterized the men of violence before the Flood—they are destroyers, but also self-destructive; and, like Marius drooping over the ruins of Carthage, or perishing in the marshes of Minturnae, they also will fall and perish upon the ruins of a desolated world. While Infidelity is destroying not only Popery but itself, there is room for the renovating action of Christianity to repair the breaches of former desolations, and to give lasting repose to the world, after the storms that have swept over it—carrying whatever is noxious into the regions of destruction, as the chaff is driven away, and disappears before the whirlwind.

That visionary state of wellbeing which a vain philosophy and a revolutionary frenzy had promised mankind, in the breaking of every yoke, and in the chasing away of every error; will give place to realities more beautiful than the wildest dreams of a perfectibility to which the world, while the human mind continues at enmity with God, must still remain a stranger. Were that one obstacle removed, then liberty, equality, and fraternity, no longer the watchwords of civil war, and the tocsin of insurrection, would be superseded by the glorious freedom with which Christ has made us free—by our recognised equality as sinners, and by an equal need of, and participation in a Divine redemption—and, lastly, by our renovated fraternity—born anew of

the Word and of the Spirit—children of the same Father—
younger brethren of the same Saviour, and co-heirs of the same
eternal glory.

To sum up the various classes of Infidels, we must begin with
an order that we can scarcely term either friends or foes—the phi-
losophic Theists—reverencing God in His works, beholding the
glory and vastness of the visible frame of creation, they worship,
as appears to them, in a more spacious temple; and though not
adverse to the views of rational divines, the peculiar doctrines of
Christianity occupy little of their attention; and might seem not
only distasteful, but adverse to their intellectual Theism. Mis-
sionaries are now found adapted to most classes of the community,
but where shall we find a suitable apostle for the Religionists
of Nature, except God should raise up a second Sir Isaac
Newton, uniting a Christian lowliness of heart, with the loftiest
views of the universe?

Such men are not at our disposal, but we may dispose our-
selves to prayer. God, who can raise up fitting instruments,
can also work without instruments, and can give the mind which
is most elated with its own acquisitions, the deepest sense of its
own unworthiness before His holiness, in whose sight the heavens
are not clean, and before whose glory the Seraphim veil their
faces.

Next to the philosophic Theists, similar in name but different
in spirit, might be placed the philosophic Deists. Some of our
elder writers wisely distinguished between Theism and Deism—
between those who neglected Revealed Religion, but did not
oppose it—holding much, perhaps, in common with it; and those
who not only neglected but rejected Revelation with hostility—
and, sometimes, not without opprobrium and contumely. Such,
in the downward course of departure from God, often resign
their belief in the more prominent tenets of Natural Religion
also. We deeply regret that Christians so little cultivate science.
Occupied often in an endeavour to remove the evils of society,
and that in its lowest and most repelling walks; the excellent
of the earth pursue their humble and unseen path of doing good,

and the urgency of present duty, and incessant calls upon their attention, leave them too little leisure for the culture of their own mental powers, the pursuit of science, and the intelligent contemplation of the glories of God in creation. But there is a time for everything; and were opportunities duly improved, for the acquirement of knowledge, it would be found that far from impeding their efforts to do good, they had enlarged their power of benefiting their fellow-creatures by improving their acquaintance with God, in His works, as well as in His word. May the rising generation be, in this respect, wiser than their fathers, and having, to a certain extent, common pursuits with men of science, openings might then be expected to present themselves of offering the Truths of Religion, as well as the discoveries of science, in a form that might gain admission where an entrance is denied at present.

After the Theists and the Deists, may be ranked the Pantheists, who in our days have suddenly risen to "an exceeding great army." We remember being asked why we had used so cramp a term as Pantheism in "The Errors regarding Religion." A few years have found a fitting answer—and all know too well, and have too often occasion to use the term Pantheism now, in opposing a system proclaimed not only from the chairs of universities, but by Swiss and other peasants guiding the plough. The immense range of Pantheistic opinions, which stretch from Atheism to Theism, might seem to require some classification and sub-division. Philosophers have given a classification and nomenclature to the clouds, but none have attempted to discriminate mists—except as a Scotch mist—a German mist—taking their names from the regions where they most prevail. But our Pantheistic mists are all of German origin, whether they have spread out into the sunny plains of France, or enveloped the shores of England, which little required their additional haze. Pantheism, as we have said, consists in the worship of the Deified Universe—but, as no two spectators contemplate the same rainbow, so each Pantheist worships a universe of his own. The Pantheists are ultra-Unitarians, they believe not only in

the Unity of God, but in the Unity of existence. Like the traveller who took off his hat to the Spectre of the Brocken, the Pantheist has not only the privilege of worshipping his own image, but of having the salutation most graciously returned; for the worshipper and his Deity are one.

Tiberius was supposed, probably without any grounds, to have intended the introduction of the Saviour into the midst of the Pagan Pantheon. What Tiberius might have proposed, Mr. Carlyle has effected; in his private oratory supporting the Saviour on one side by Odin, and on the other by Mahomet; while the number of his Penates is completed, by the introduction of Dr. Johnson and Burns! This hero-worshipper has a singular taste in his odd selection of heroes, yet has a precedent in the Chinese, who united the worship of Fo and Napoleon Bonaparte.

The same accommodating religion prevails in France. Quinet in many respects so deservedly admired, and who, we are assured, pronounced a funeral address over his mother's grave, as orthodox as any Christian divine could have spoken; yet, in his ultra-Catholicity, sees a coincidence, if not an absolute identity between the Hindoo deity Indra and the thrice holy Jehovah. Michelet, with many of whose political sentiments we can sympathize, replaces the worship of the Virgin Mary by the worship of France—a new and revolutionary deity—and the many advantages are enumerated of substituting for Ave Marias a daily ascription of praise and glory to this guardian power. God, Michelet intimates, was manifested in Christ Jesus, but appeared with an equal if not more glorious display of His attributes, in revolutionary France. Victor Hugo chants in the same strain, and draws a parallel between the miracles of the Saviour and the marvels which France revolutionized has operated. The resurrection of Lazarus, for example, is paralleled with the resuscitation of Poland.—“Un jour il s'approcha de la Pologne morte, il leva le doigt et lui cria : Lève-toi ! la Pologne morte se leva.”

To the ordinary Pantheists may be joined those more vulgar but practical philosophers the Communists—and these seem to

bring the system of unity and community to perfection, asserting a common property in nature as well as in the deity. The deity of Hegel, as we have observed, is the process of thought unfolding itself without end—manifesting itself in each individual, having no separate existence from the worshipper, and being thus the soul of each and sum of all—the common property of the human race, to whose joint-stock existence they all contribute their mite of syllogisms. Such a joint property is not very profitable, and the Communists have wisely thrown in, to balance the deficiency, the material world, and all that it inherits. Thus they themselves become the rightful possessors of creation, as well as the incarnation of their own deity. And, when they have thrown off their superstitious terrors, they purpose to be their own mighty Providence, with the power and the will to provide for the innumerable wants of man through the ages to come. We might hope that such views would speedily work their own cure—and we might not unreasonably conclude that such men should “proceed no further, for that their folly should be manifest to all.”

Pantheism itself is but the transition from ignorance to knowledge, as we have formerly pointed out. It is the intermediate passage between Polytheism and Theism. True philosophy and true religion alike might be its cure. Such works as the admirable “Eclipse of Faith,” applying not only to English but to foreign infidelity, would be of excellent service. The original and material infidelity of France has been overwhelmed with its own success, and buried under the ruins it has occasioned. The infidelity of Germany still survives, but at perpetual war with itself, tossing to and fro, like unstable billows on a stormy sea.

We need scarcely notice what may be considered as the remains of French infidelity, such as the positive philosophy of Comte, with his three stages of the theological, metaphysical, and positive periods—dismissing the creation and the Creator, withdrawing even power from nature, and mind from man, and leaving but phenomena—and their classifications, as the sole objects of genuine philosophy. This scarcely deserved notice

did not Humboldt, in his admirable *Cosmos*, discover somewhat of a similar spirit. Disgusted with the crude theories of his countrymen, he contemplates the beautiful order of the universe without direct reference to its Author; preferring a statement of facts to the doubtful speculations of his countrymen—but, alas! also to those certain steps by which in genuine philosophy we rise to the throne of the universe.

We may leave out of view the Materialist and Atheistic systems which flourished in France, (but which have sunk lower and lower; descending to Robert Owen and his Socialists; and ready, we trust, to re-enter the abyss from which they originally rose,) and content ourselves with indicating the great cure for all—more philosophy and more religion—more of the inductive philosophy of Bacon—more of the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ. Popery, it is true, will be destroyed by infidelity, and infidelity will be destroyed by itself. Infidelity may take from men the tenets which they believe, but it cannot deprive them of the tendency to believe; new systems of opinion will immediately flow into the exhausted vacuum.

But, while Popery is expiring the dying monster may inflict a deadly wound upon us, if we are off our guard; and, before infidelity has destroyed itself, it may, joined with extreme democracy, destroy the institutions which we so justly value. We have the most urgent reason to guard against both evils—against the crisis of Popery, and the crisis of Infidelity—to watch diligently, and to watch unto prayer. Infidelity exists but in opposition; when it has overcome the systems it is opposed to, its course is terminated. When it leaves its deadly sting infixed in the wound, it expires. It has no object, no hope, no principle, but that of overturning all hopes and all principles. Christianity is eminently the living power, and motive force, of our human life. Its touch heals the waters of bitterness, and its advent gives life to the dead. Were it less opposed by obstructing influences, did it become more fully the master principle of our being, it would make way at once through the opposing crowd of obstacles, and vindicate its superior origin and heaven-derived

authority. We might cite as an undoubted proof of its healing power the effect of "The London City Mission." London, the confluence of all wretchedness and sin, as well as of wealth and of talents, threatened, but a few years ago, to become the plague centre, and Dead Sea, of our native land. Within a very few years the plague has been staid in its progress, and a dawn of better days appears at hand. Let the same system be applied to the whole of Britain. Let Christianity do the work of history in the words so well applied by Godwin from Burke—"Attend to the neglected, and remember the forgotten"—and a new era is awaiting our country. Let the influence of Christianity be augmented in our own hearts, and the number of Christians will be augmented also. Great is the power of a prevailing principle—mighty the force of prayer. Let us go forward in the Divine strength, the victory will be ours, and the benefit mankind's.

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